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Master's Thesis of Educational Administration

Academic Adjustment of International Students in South Korea: A Case Study of Seoul National University

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Academic Adjustment of International Students in South Korea: A Case Study of Seoul National University

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Abstract

This thesis examines the academic adjustment of international students at Seoul National University, focusing on the expectations of international students in prior to enrolling to Seoul National University and how those expectations affect their adjustment in the academic context. Previously there are many studies that investigated on the adjustment of international students in different countries especially, USA, which is the country with the highest number of incoming international students. Previous studies point out the issues and challenges that international students faced after arriving to the host university. On the other hand, the purpose of this study is to explore on the expectations of international students before enrolling to Seoul National University and what role do those expectations play in the adjustment of international students. Using Qualitative method, five international students from the college of education were invited to participate in this research through snowball sampling. In-depth semi-structured interviews from 40 – 60 minutes were conducted, three times from each participant. Major findings of the study include students with wrong expectations had greater disappointment which led them to have thoughts of dropping out of the academic program. On the other hand, students with right expectations adjusted well in the academic setting. Moreover, Lysgaard's U-Curve theory which was used as a theoretical

framework was not applicable to all students since international students had different stages of adjustment based on their characteristics.

Keyword: International Students, Academic Adjustment, Expectations, Socialization, Top University Dilemma

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The number of international students in South Korean universities has increased rapidly due to both government and universities' constant effort to increase global competitiveness of Korean higher education. According to the International College of Economics and Finance, the Korean government intends to increase the number of international students up to 200,000 by 2023 ("ICEF Monitor," 2015) and to establish itself as region's educational hub. Universities like Seoul National University are becoming more multi-cultural (Asia News Monitor, 2012). There are 375 exchange students enrolled at Seoul National University as of April 2016 and 1337 regular international students from 50 different countries (i.e. Russia, American, Japan, Malaysia, China, Mongolia, Russia, India, Germany etc.) (Source: Seoul National University Website). Understanding the academic adjustment process of international students could help the hosting universities and policy makers to formulate strategies and plans to help these international students to have a productive learning experience, plus based on their experiences, international students will recommend their peers to join the hosting university as they go back to their own countries (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). By doing so both parties could benefit from each other since the international students could bring diversity in the form of language, culture, religion, learning style etc. to the host

university (Trice, 2003). International students spent 796 billion won (\$620 million) here in 2014. The ministry hopes the revenue to increase to 1.5 trillion won by 2020 (Jung, 2015). There are several economic benefits that one could also expect while enrolling international students, and it is a great mean to bring stability to the economy of a country. At the moment International students account for only 2 percent of total enrollment in Korea's higher education as compared to 18 percent in the United Kingdom and 19 percent in Australia. The OECD average is 8 percent. The ministry aims to increase the ratio of international students from 2 percent to 5 percent among OECD countries by 2023 (Jung, 2015).

Previously there are many studies regarding the adjustment of international students in different countries especially the USA. Previous studies point out the issues and challenges that international students had after coming to the host university. However in this study expectation of international students before coming to Seoul National University were explored and how those expectations affect their academic adjustment. Lysgaard's U-Curve theory was used as the theoretical framework, which argues that all international students begin their academic journey with honeymoon phase leading to cultural shock and then the adjustment. However, it was found out that this model does not fit in the case of all students. Students who came to

Seoul National University with wrong expectations were not able to adjust academically even after staying for almost a year. They got these wrong expectations through friends, or through the internet, while just visiting South Korea, taking language course etc. Students with right expectations had fewer complaints as compared to students with wrong expectations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Numerous researchers have studied about the issues and challenges that international student face while studying in a country with a different language, culture, environment etc. Previous studies show that international students go through loneliness, stress, discrimination etc. (L. E. Anderson, 1994; Ramsay, Barker, & Jones, 1999; Trice, 2003; Williams & Johnson, 2011).

Despite of all the research regarding the issues and challenges of international students, still the researchers admit that there is room for more investigation. As the mobility of the international students increases more understanding is needed regarding the international students (Black & Mark, 1991; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008).

At present many researcher seek to investigate what elements keep the international students from adjusting to the host country and

university (Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002; Stafford Jr, Marion, & Salter, 1980). Understanding the expectation of international before attending the desired university could also help understand the issues of international students. Understanding the expectations of international students are as important as understanding their adjustment after they arrive to the place where they desire to study (Chen, 1999; Ladd & Ruby Jr, 1999). Therefore in this thesis the expectations of the international students will be investigated.

1.2. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to seek the academic adjustment issues of international students here at Seoul National University. Seoul National University has around 28,630 students are enrolled on Gwanak Campus. The university continues to promote collaborations and has academic exchange agreements with around 860 universities and research institutes worldwide. Over 250 classes at SNU are taught in English and the number is rapidly increasing. However, the number of international students has dropped from 1899 in 2011 and also the number of exchange students has dropped as well. Already, Seoul National University has many different programs here to help the international students to adjust not just academically but also in other walks of life. OIA (office of international affairs) is one of the many programs here. As soon as international students are on campus,

different orientation programs are conducted by OIA to help newly arrived international students to know the culture, how to use transport, immigration process and so forth ("Seoul National University,"). What made the number dropout is a question one has to ask. Highlighting the experiences of international students while studying could help understand and improve the adjustment problems here at Seoul National University. If the students have a good attitude towards the School they would recommend other students from their home country to attend Universities in South Korea.

1.3. Research Objectives and Questions

This research aims to explore, if the expectations of international students before coming to Seoul National University could affect their academic adjustment. In order to probe adjustment issues in this study following questions are put forth.

1. What expectations did the international graduate students have before coming to Seoul National University?
2. Do those expectations affects their academic adjustment at Seoul National University?

1.4. Significance of the Study

As the number of international students is increasing in South

Korea, more research is needed to understand these international students, in order to help them adjust well to the Korean educational system and the culture, so that they could have a productive and true learning experience at the hosting university. Previous studies shows, students faced cultural shock in the U.S, and the language was a hurdle in their studies, similar issues could be faced by the students as well here in South Korea. Therefore the need for more investigation and further research on the adjustment of international students cannot be ignored. Exploring and understanding the experiences of international students could help the stakeholders and policy makers to form policies that could help the adjustment of these international students. Moreover, these experiences could help the future students who are planning to study in Korea to have the right expectations, and what they need to prepare in advance before starting their academic journey in Korea.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Internationalization of Higher Education

According to the OECD report of 2015, more than 4 million students were enrolled in tertiary education outside of their own country (OECD, 2015). Some experts believe that this number will increase to around 15 million by the year 2025 (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Most of them are from Asian countries. China is on top followed by India and Germany. The United States still leads by from when it comes to hosting international students (26% of the total), which is followed by United Kingdom (15%), France (10%), Germany (10%) and Australia (8%) among OECD countries. International students prefer studying at English medium universities or Western European countries. However, recently there is a decline in the mobility of international student in these top countries and there is a rise of international students in Oceania and Asian regions (Organisation for Economic, Development, & Innovation, 2016).

Globalization has brought many changes in different policies of different countries. Due to the pressure of globalization, policy makers seek to make policies that are global world friendly. Higher education has been a part of it, especially internationalizing higher educational institution due to several reasons. It has been observed that the mobility

of international students bring economic goods to the country. For example in the case of USA international students added an estimated \$12 billion to the U.S economy. However, money is not the only reason, internationalization is also seeking collaboration and networking with other universities in order to enhance research and knowledge capacity (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

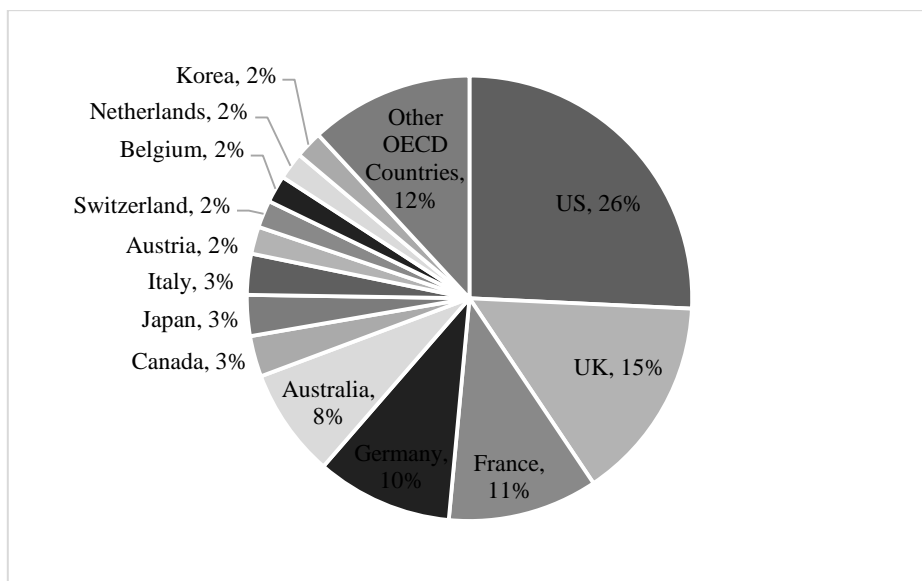


Figure 1: Distribution of Foreign and International Student in OECD Countries at the Master's and Doctoral Level (2014)

(Source: Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators, 2014)

2.2. Internationalization of Higher Education in South Korea

Higher education became on the agenda of trade negotiations,

specifically in early 2000s when the Korean government started to take significant steps to increase the mobility of international students toward South Korea. Projects such as “Global Korea Scholarship Program, “Study Korea Project” have attracted international students to South Korea. The Study Korea Project, which was launched in 2004, aimed at attracting 50,000 international students by 2010 (Jon, Lee, & Byun, 2014). This number Korean government seeks to increase up to 200,000 by 2023. Recently the number of international students is decreasing. The Ministry of Education is revising their policies to accomplish this goal. For example, universities are encouraged to open departments taught only in English and are only for the foreigners (Jung, 2015).

The number of international students is increasing dramatically in South Korea, and Korean government scholarship programs are trying to make sure that these international students are supported financially (Y. S. Kim, 2010; Park, 2010; Song, 2012).

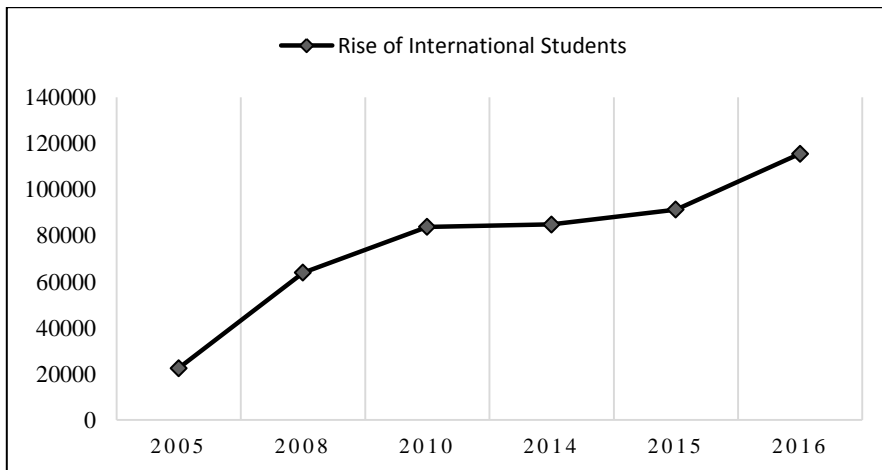


Figure 2: Rise of International Students

(Source: KEDI Education Statistics Service, 2016)

Regardless of the efforts, South Korea is still below the average among the OECD countries when it comes to international students. Korean Government is trying hard to improve the number of the international students but has not been successful in doing so. However, the number of the international students enrolled in regular degree programs are not increasing at a desirable pace and Seoul National University is also experiencing loss on international student number regardless of the different programs introduced by Seoul National University.

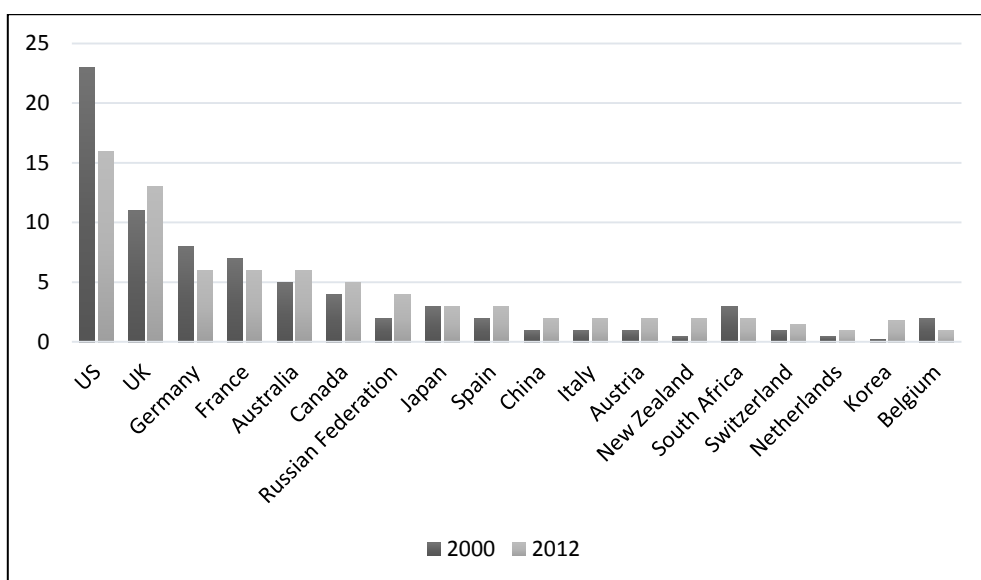


Figure 3: Trends in International Education Market Shares (2000, 2012)

Source: Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators, 2000, 2012

However, the host universities, including professors, students, and administration display less global attitude towards the international students, which leads to low satisfaction of international students while studying at Korean universities (Park, 2010). To accommodate international students, Universities are putting immense efforts in improving infrastructures, such as building dorms and other welfare facilities, however, diversity is still not seen as a strength by the local members on campus (Song, 2012). Even the universities are striving to be more internationalized, the term international or internationalization or how to make one university international is a vague concept in South Korean universities (Kim, 2010).

Chinese student's adaptive experience in academics in Korean

graduate school was not so positive. Language was a concern especially when they were asked to do presentations in Korean language which led to embarrassment. Proper orientation was missing. The Chinese students did not know how to study at a graduate school (D. H. Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2007). Lee found out that international students have less or no communication with the domestic students in South Korea, which led to the marginalization of international students. (Lee, 2015).

2.3. Adjustment of International Students

1) Previous studies on adjustment of international students

Much has been researched and published about international students in the United States or other developed English-speaking countries. International students have always preferred studying at English-speaking or Western European countries. The United States continues to host the most students in the world (17%), followed by United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and France summing up to about 50% of the total. However, recently, there is a decline in the rate. On the other side, Oceania and Asian regions experienced an increase at hosting international students. However, there is not much literature available about international students in Asian countries (Jon et al., 2014).

Previous studies show that understanding international students are

of immense importance. International students bring diversity to the class with their own culture and background in academics that they had. They also contribute to the economic benefits of the hosting country and University. Above all these international students, who are the future leaders, will have good will for the hosting country (Klomegah, 2006).

Previous studies pointed out that Japanese students in the U.S were frustrated because of the lack of English language skills. Because of the language barrier they were not able to socialize with the local students. Japanese students who were used to work in groups back in their home country felt isolated and lonely because American students like working independently on their own, whereas the Japanese students wanted to be dependent (Sato & Hodge, 2015). In Yan & Berliner (2009)'s study, it pointed out how Chinese students were facing challenges with language and had to deal with tremendous stress that arises from difference in educational system. In China, students tend to listen while the professor teaches but in the U.S students were encouraged to participate as much as possible. Chinese students are trained to follow with strict discipline and expect the professor to give them instruction which they could follow but it was opposite in the US where they were encouraged to do things on their own. Chinese students felt after enrollment the support they needed was missing.

Faculty and American students expected them to adapt the culture and fit into the mold without needed support and encouragement (Yan & Berliner, 2009). Lee(2010) in her research also found out that international students also felt unfair treatment in the classroom. Dodge (1990) states that a student was called terrorist because she would wear a veil. From these findings, it can be assumed that many institutions are not prepared to handle difficulty caused by cultural difference among students and faculties.

Cura and Isik (2016) in their studies conclude that acculturation stress has a positive correlation with the academic adjustment. They found out that students that have with high acculturation stress scored low in their academic achievement. Social support is another factor that they suggested could help a student to adjust to adjust well at school (Cura & Işik, 2016). On the other hand, Ramsey and her co-researcher try to investigate the experiences of international students that helped them to adjust and the experiences that actually kept them from adjusting. They use the cross-cultural adaption model of Anderson and tries to use it for academic adjustment of students. They find out similarities between cross-cultural adjustment and academic adjustment. Student go through the similar experience of experience/encounter in the beginning and then faced by obstacles to which students respond and finally overcoming(Ramsay et al., 1999).

International students in South Korea like any other countries had issues in adjusting academically. Several Korean Universities are trying to increase the use of English as the medium of instruction in the classroom to attract international students. However, the issue is not only with English, nevertheless it does not help the international students effectively. A study conducted at Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology found out that most of the lectures were in English so students did not have much problem with that. However, the integration between international and local students was loose. Kazakh students always leaned towards spending more time with Kazakh Nationals. Moreover, when they needed support or guidance regarding school or other issues they always consulted their friends from Kazakhstan. Sometimes the professor, switched to Korean while giving English lecture also brought some discomfort to the international students. Another difference that they found was grades versus learning. Most of the Korean students put many efforts to secure good grades because of competitive culture. However, international students place less emphasis on grades but more on actual learning process. Moreover, international students place importance on socialization with the peers which brought difference in the priority among the students which finally led to more gap between international and local students. Another hurdle at academic adjustment was understanding the

academic culture of the school itself, in simple words how things are done. They also found out the lack of training of local students as well as in helping them to understand the international students (Choi & Kim, 2014).

Another issue that the international students faced while studying at the U.S was ignorance of American students regarding the culture, history, geography of the international students. Because of the lack of information regarding the international students, the questions they would ask international students would increase their stress level and discouraged them from socializing with the local students. For example, they would ask, “Do you live on trees in Africa?” These question could be offensive and could make a student lose his or her confidence in the academic and social setting (Peterson et.al, 1999). The fact need not be neglected that these students are already stressed and full of anxiety because of leaving their hometown, friends, and family. They do not have any social support which they could receive from their friends and family members while they are back in their country. When the opposite is done by the native or local students it stresses them even more (Smiljanic, 2013). Another core element is about peer interaction is missing between international and local students. Most of the time international students socialize only with other international students or students from their own country, which

also is another problem that leads to maladjustment of international students (Andrade, 2006).

The gender difference was found in the study for North American students studying in Taiwan. Male students were able to adjust well as compared to their female counterpart. Male international students had more agreeable personality to the Taiwanese culture. Nationality was another element that cannot be ignored. Students from other nationalities also found it hard to adjust. One of the reasons were that Westerners are respected more in Taiwan since they are on good job positions as compared to people from developing countries such as the Philippines. Since Filipinos work at factories, the way they are treated is different as compared to the westerners. To them, personality really matters when it comes adjusting (Swagler & Jome, 2005).

Williams and Johnson found out while doing their research on multicultural attitudes and friendships with international students that 43% of their sample had one or more international student friends, and 57% of the local American students did not have any international friend. Open minded was the key findings because students with an open mind had more international friends compared to those with a narrow mind. In their research, local students became more distant to the international students after 9/11 incident (Williams and Johnson, 2010). Social status (gender, marital status), individual resources

(language skills, financial situation), social resources (exposure to US culture), and social Context (discrimination) are the factors used to find the satisfaction level of International students (Williams & Johnson, 2011).

Another study regarding academic adjustment, pretentious behavior was found in the international students. They pretended to understand the English language while talking to their professors or classmates. Terui found out different reasons for this behavior such as protection of self-esteem, response to the social pressure, keeping the flow of the conversation etc. Frustration from the both party could also lead to this kind of behavior (Terui, 2012). The element of fear was also found in using the native language of the host country in the international students (Fricka, 1997).

Loneliness is another issue that international students face while adjusting to the new environment. Therefore the international students devise strategies to cope up with these issues of loneliness and homesickness. Often these students try to find people of the same ethnicity and background that they could socialize in order to adjust to the new environment. However, Al-Sharideh and Goe in their investigation regarding the personal adjustment of international students, they concluded students who are not able to find people from their own ethnicity or background, they try to find ways in order to

socialize with the local students in order to adjust (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998). When asked, “Who do you turn to in the face of loneliness?” 88% students responded turning to their own friends from their own country or ethnic background. In academic context in their study Sawir and other discovered one of the Ph.D. students had a high expectation of Ph.D. and thought there will be a lot of conferences, group research and interactive studies with other scholars, however, after coming to the school the student experienced always working all by herself, which led to less adjustment in academic setting. Loneliness also led to lack of confidence (Sawir et al., 2008).

2) Lysgaard’s U-Curve theory

The term adjustment is defined differently in different disciplines of academics. Often adaptation, acculturation, adjustment, and accommodation are used interchangeably (Kim, 1988). For example in Biology, the term “adjustment” is considered as adaptation. In the field of biology, the process of adaptation begins with the favorability of the environment. Where an organism changes ones inherited characteristic to the one that suits it best to survive (Ogburn, 1953).

Likewise in the discipline of psychology, sociology, anthropology etc., the term adjustment has its own roots. Adjustment is differentiated in two different areas in the field of psychology, “psychological

adjustment” and sociocultural adjustment”. Psychological adjustment refers to the how a sojourner copes with stress and depression to achieve emotional stability and sociocultural adjustment refers to the fitting of the individual in the new setup through socialization and other means (Rana-Deuba & Ward, 1999).

From the sociological point of view, Shaffer and Shoben suggest that “adjustment” and “adaptation” are different terms with a different meaning. According to them, adjustment is made to fulfill short-term needs where else adaptation refers to the long-term needs. For example if a sojourner desires to study and work and later live in the host country he/she will try to adapt to the host culture and values, however if a sojourner wishes only to study and then leave the country he/she will try to adjust since the drive is just fulfill the needs for time being (Shaffer, 1956).

Acculturation is another term used for adjustment in Anthropology. Acculturation is defined as, “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups.”(Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). Berry et al divided acculturation into two levels, group-level and individual-level (Berry et al, 1987).

In this study adjustment of international student keeping the short-term perspective will be used, since there are two kind of students according to OECD, international students who have only one purpose to acquire higher education in a foreign country, and foreign students who are already living in a foreign country or want to live for a long-term in a different country and do not desire to go back.

There are several theories and models concerning the adjustment process. Lysgaard's U-Curve theory of adjustment has been the model most cited in cultural adjustment research (Black & Mark, 1991). Lysgaard after studying 200 Norwegian students in the US proposed the U-Shaped Curve the process of adjustment in 1955. According to this model, the adjustment process seems to be easy in the beginning and then things get difficult and a sojourner feels lonely or happy, leading to adjustment and again and then more adjusted to the foreign land (Lysgaard, 1955). Oberg puts it in four stages the entire adjustment process. First one is "honeymoon stage". In the beginning, students are excited to be in a new country with all the high expectation which is followed by hostile stage. In this stage the students face the reality. The third one is recovery stage in which students start to understand the culture and knowledge. The fourth stage is where students are able to get around and know how to handle any given situation. Oberg further mentions that the schools haven't changed much of their policies in

regard to the students, where else international students are all different (Oberg, 1960). However, Church summarizes from the studies and research conducted by other scholars against U-Curve that it is, “inconclusive”, “weak”, and “over generalized”, since not all students begin their new phase of life with a honeymoon phase and that is just a minority (Church, 1982; Lysgaard, 1955).

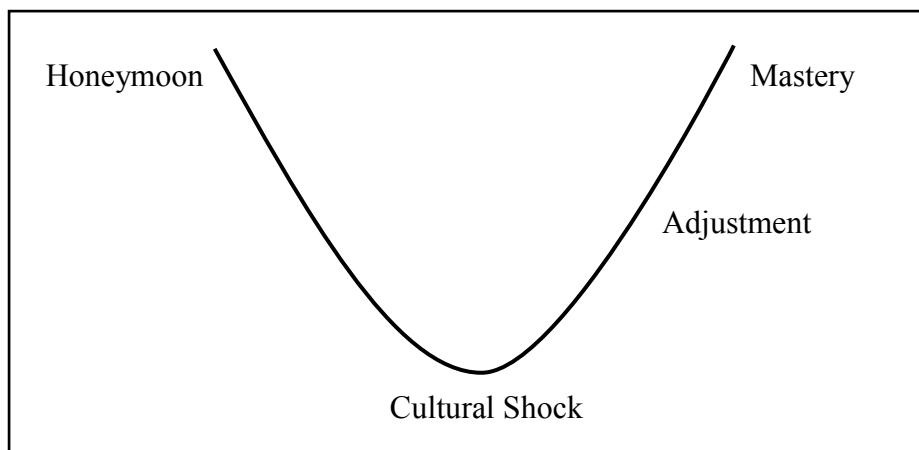


Figure 4: Lysgaard's U-Curve
(Source: Lysgaard, 1955)

2.4. Definition of Terms

Academic Adjustment

The process that takes place between individual and environment in order to achieve the final goal of “fit” is one definition of adjustment (L. E. Anderson, 1994). In the context of academic adjustment, that “fit” will be considered as the student and the school coming together

fitting to achieve the goal of learning. To fit a student learn and gain the skills and knowledge to expands one's understanding about the environment which in this study is the academic world (Boekaerts, 1993).

In this thesis academic is not only about getting good grades or passing the classes. Gerdes & Mallinckrodt suggest that academic adjustment is not just “scholarly potential” (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). However, it could be a part of it. But adjustment as mentioned above in the definition it's a learning process and also fitting with the environment. A student could get perfect grades and yet be isolated in the classroom or at school (Klein, 1971). The academic adjustment also doesn't mean that a student needs to lose his or her identity in order to adjust. A lot of time Host University expects sojourners to act and behave and do things the way they do. Following the rules and regulations are important, however, one shouldn't lose his or her identity (Bochner & Wicks, 1972).

Based on the literature above the definition of academic adjustment in this paper will include: Successfully completing school requirements and graduate, having a good relationship with the domestic students (which in this case is the Korean students), having a positive view of the university and self-confidence in the new school environment.

International Student

An international student in this study refers to a student who left his country and moved to another country just for the purpose of the study and his/her stay is temporary and not a permanent one. It should be different from a foreign student. Because a foreign student could be a student who is already living in another country and his sole purpose of moving to another country is not just to study but most likely to work or live there ("OECD," 2013). In the case of South Korea, it would be a foreign student studying on a D-2 (higher education) study abroad visa (Custer, 2016).

Expectation

Azmat et al (2013), in their research, understanding aspirations and expectations of international students in Australian higher education, quote from Oxford English Dictionary the definition of expectation as “a preconceived idea or opinion with regard to what will take place, the act of mentally looking for something to take place, anticipation” (Azmat et al., 2013). In this case-study the preconceived ideas and opinions regarding Seoul National University were explored in regard to the academic adjustment process.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1. Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative research method is chosen to understand what the participants are trying to say and hear their voices (Lichtman, 2013). To do so the researcher arranged semi-structured interviews where the participants could express them freely about their experiences that they had while studying as a graduate student at Seoul National University.

In this case study, snowball sampling of graduate students studying at Seoul National University South Korea is employed. Students from the college of education with different nationality and different majors will be targeted in order to get a broader perspective of what students are going through. The reason for choosing different nationalities is because as found in the literature review that adjustment could be different between people from different nationalities, race, social background, financial status, marital status etc. Therefore, the target is to interview different students from diverse background such as nationalities, race, and gender. This study is a case study that includes a semi-structured interview of 5 students. Three different interviews will be conducted of the same student at different time in order to have in-depth details that students are going through.

The case study design is used since it provides in-depth investigation of the phenomenon possible (Creswell, 2003). The

instrument used to have a close look at the adjustment of international students especially in the case of their expectations before coming to Seoul National University and how it is affected their adjustment in the academic setting, face to face interview employed here would be much more suitable. Face to face interview is the oldest and most highly recommended method of survey research, especially when conducting in-depth research. Semi-structured interviews will help the research on to the track, yet the interviewee will have a freedom to talk about his/her experiences freely (Singleton, 2004).

The reason for choosing College of Education is because college education is composed of different majors, such as educational psychology, educational counseling, physical education, Global education cooperation etc. which can reflect disciplinary characteristics that students are affiliated in. In these different majors, students work in groups as well as on their own. Plus classes are offered in English and Korean (mostly Korean language).

3.2. Research design

3.2.1 Participant

Interview were held in two different phases. First, pilot interviews were conducted and in the second phase interviews were finalized according to the need of the research. All the participants were selected

through snowball sampling. Participants in the first phase were from different departments, however, finalized participants were from the college of education.

Pilot Interview

Pilot interviews were conducted from different students in order to formulate proper questions for our real case-study participants. These Pilot interviews also helped in the research formulation and direction to which it will proceed. It also helped the researcher to choose one discipline instead of focusing on all the majors. Targeting all major would be time consuming and less accurate since different disciplines have different ways of doing things and have different norms. However, Pilot interviews gave a direction what to target and what to leave.

Table 1: Participants (Pilot Interviews)

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Sem	Major	Program
Amos	24	M	Iranian	2 nd	Physical Education	Masters
Liz	25	F	Chinese	5 th	Chemistry	Masters PhD
Jes	29	F	Canadian	2 nd	Life-Long Education	PhD
Silas	40	M	American	5 th	Linguistics	Masters
Sang	35	F	Laotian	4 th	Global Education Cooperation	Masters
Zoe	25	M	Chinese	3 rd	Counseling	Masters
Diwan	29	M	Bengali	3 rd	Global Education Cooperation	Masters
Nal	25	M	India	3 rd	Korean Language	Masters
Dia	29	F	Colombia	2 nd	Physical Education	Masters

Finalized Participants

After conducting several pilot interviews from different departments and different majors, five students from College of Education at Seoul National University were drawn. These participants were given pseudonyms. Amos and Dia are from the physical education major, Messy is from lifelong education, Diwan belongs to Global education cooperation and Yoona is from Educational Administration major.

The reason for choosing the college of education is because in this major students work in teams as well as individually. This could help explore the experiences of these international students working in groups with other local students, and how do they cope up when they have to work on their own. Most of these participants have already lived in Korea for almost a year or more before enrolling to their current program. Three in depth semi-structured interviews were conducted for 40 – 60 minutes per each participant. Below is the chart of the students in detail.

Details regarding the participants is mentioned in the table below, according to their gender, major, age, nationality etc. For the purpose of confidentiality Pseudonyms are given to the participants. All the participants are drawn from the College of Education with different majors.

Table 2: Participants

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Sem	Major	Program
Amos	24	M	Iranian	2 nd	Physical Education	Masters
Messy	29	F	Canadian	2 nd	Life-long Education	PhD
Diwan	29	M	Bengali	3 rd	Global Education Cooperation	Masters
Dia	29	F	Colombia	2 nd	Physical Education	Masters
Yoona	26	F	China	2 nd	Educational Administration	PhD

3.2.2. Research Site

The research site was chosen according to the convenience of the participants. However, they were requested to choose quiet places with less interruption, since the participants were informed ahead that their interview will be recorded. They were also offered the research lab of the researcher, where many rooms are available with no noise and administration office was requested to provide rooms if students are willing to come to the research lab. If the participants felt comfortable meeting in a café or even library the request was considered. The main purpose was to provide the participants with a relaxing environment where they could freely talk about their experiences, express comfortably what they are going through.

Seoul National University was selected for this research for the reason because it stresses on diversity and envisions to increase international community on campus. More than 28,000 students are enrolled on Gwanak Campus. The university continues to promote collaborations and has academic exchange agreements with around 860 universities and research institutes worldwide. Over 250 classes at SNU are taught in English and the number is rapidly increasing. As of 2008, the number of academic papers published in the international journal was 3,792 which made SNU ranked 20th in the world as of 2008, and this number is increasing rapidly as well. There are 375 exchange students (As of April 2016) and 1337 regular students (As of April 2016) from 50 countries (i.e. American, Japan, Malaysia, China, Mongolia, Russia, India etc.). However, this number has dropped from 1899 Students in 2011 and also the number of exchange students has dropped as well (Source: Seoul National University Website).

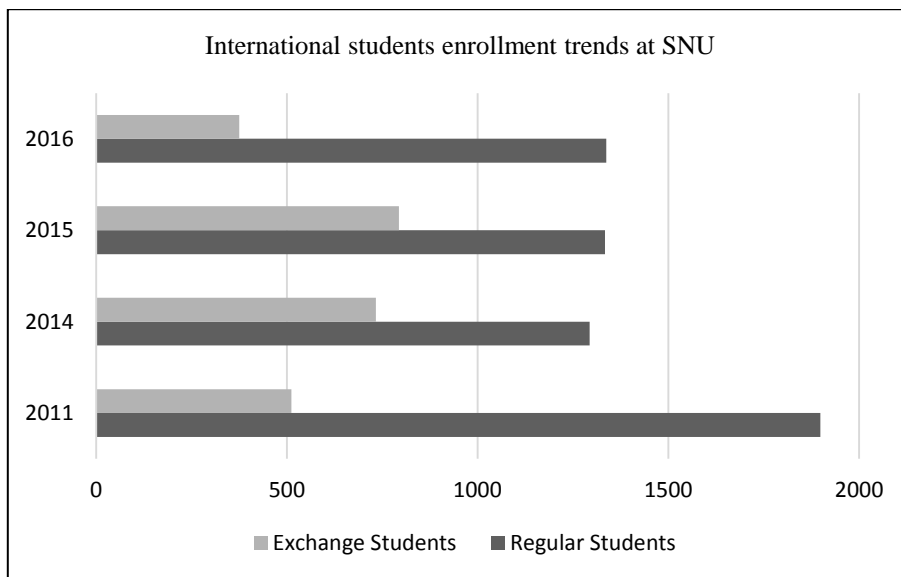


Figure 5: International Students Enrollment Trends at SNU
(Source: Seoul National University Statistics, 2016)

Seoul National University has already many different programs here to help the international students to adjust not just academically but also in other walks of life. OIA (office of international affairs) is one of the many programs here. As soon as international students are on campus there are different orientation programs are conducted by OIA to help these students to know the culture, how to use transport, immigration process and so forth ("Seoul National University,"). What made the number dropout is a question one has to ask. Highlighting the experiences of international students while studying could help understand and improve the adjustment problems here at Seoul National University. If the students have a good attitude towards the School they would recommend other students from their home country

to attend Universities in South Korea.

Chapter 4. Findings

The findings of this study supports the Lysgaard's U-Curve theory and its four stages: Honeymoon – Cultural Shock – Adjustment – Mastery. Most of the participants mentioned term “party” for the honeymoon period. In this phase which was the first few weeks after the arrival here at Seoul National University they met other new international students through welcoming programs organized by Seoul National University to help international students to come together and meet other new international students and get to know people. There were also several programs arranged by office of international affairs for the new international students about general life in South Korea such as getting registered at the immigration office, public transport, etc.

In the next phase of cultural shock when the new international students started their classes and learned that it is different from their own home country or how they are used to learn, it could be implied as a cultural shock to them.

Adjustment phase led the students to know how things work at Seoul National University. In this phase they were able to learn Korean to certain extent and also made some Korean friends.

In the last phase of phase of mastery the international students knew professors and the students. In this phase they had more friends

in comparison to the earlier phases. They have their own social network and knew how to get through different situation.

However, not all the students had honeymoon phase in the beginning. Some of the participants had difficulty from the first day of arriving in South Korea. Participants who had never traveled another country before, or were poor at English and Korean Language went through stress and depression.

The findings revealed that international students encountered different challenges while adjusting academically after arriving at Seoul National University. Different themes emerged while interviewing the participants such as “wrong expectations”, “misinformation”, “top university dilemma”, “less or no involvement”, “few course options”, “language barrier”, and “lack of socialization”.

4.1. Honeymoon and Shock Phase: Prior Expectations vs. Reality

In this phase, participants were excited about the new University and new country that they were about to experience. Some have already visited South Korea prior to getting enrolled at Seoul National University. Others took Korean language courses from different Universities here in South Korea. Through their past experiences and information they could receive they had high hopes until they were faced with the reality.

Before coming to Seoul National University, participants of this study had different expectations in accordance to their own interests as a graduate student. Few of the participants were interested in research, and they were expecting that they will be involved in different projects with other students. They were interested in collaboration and making networks of their own. Others had desire to learn from the entire educational system since they did not have a well-developed educational system in their own place of origin. Most of them expected to have English as a medium of instruction while taking regular classes at graduate school. Yet other thoughts there will be many international students in the classes and they will be able to learn from different multinational students.

Due to wrong or ambiguous expectations, most of the participants were disappointed. All of the students interviewed in this study wanted to drop out and leave regardless of reasonable scholarship plans they are receiving. Previous research suggests that students want to drop and leave if their expectations are not met (OECD, 2002). Three of the participants already heard and knew much about Seoul National University before coming to Korea. For example, Dia and Yoon took language courses in South Korea and they had learned the Korean language in their home country as well. When they visited South Korea, they were told by most of the Koreans that if they ever desire to

study in South Korea they should only choose Seoul National University, since it is extremely international and language is not a problem because everyone speaks English there. Since Dia and Yoona already studied at language institutes in South Korea before enrolling at Seoul National University, they met many of the international students in the language department. These students were enrolled at low ranked schools as compared to Seoul National University. So they assumed since Seoul National is one of the top schools, it will have more international students. However, according to Yoona and Dia, they were discouraged when they found that there were just a few international students.

Amos who never visited South Korea before was able to study with some other international students in Malaysia was told the same thing, that if he ever considers Korea for graduate studies he should only choose Seoul National University since it is very international and language will never be an issue. Therefore, before coming to Korea, Amos was less worried about learning the Korean Language or about not knowing the new culture that he was about to face.

Jessi on the other side, who completed her masters from a university in Japan had no expectation or very low expectation from Seoul National University since she thought both Japan and Korea share a similar pattern of the educational environment and probably she

will have the same experience as in Japan. In her case, she was much more satisfied and did not have as many complaints as compared to other participants in the case study. However, although she did not have much difficulty at adjusting at first, she was faced with some other challenges that she was not expecting.

Two of the participant called the administration office of their own department to make sure if the medium of instruction is English. They were confirmed from administrative staff that the program is in English.. However, after arriving at Seoul National University, they were told that only one English class will be offered in the semester because not many international students are enrolled. Dia who is a student of Korean Government Scholarship Program was also accepted at Korea University but decided to come to Seoul National University because of more diverse choices of English classes available in the institution compared to Korea University.

“I was also accepted at Korea University but...I called to SNU and ask about the English classes. They offer me more English classes at the beginning that was the reason”
(Dia).

On asking if he learned the Korean Language before coming to Korea Amos said:

“No, actually no I didn’t learn anything because it was not

supposed to be Korean language. Coz I made...contact to the administration in our department, is it in English and they said yes. I was wondering how come the administration....doesn't require me to have the Korean proficiency and has required me to have English proficiency, and then I come here...the exam is in Korean language. And the classes are in Korean language that is really really really....like...issue...why you don't require students' Korean proficiency test if conducting the classes in Korean” (Amos).

Amos also mentioned that when he came here everything was different. Everything was in the Korean language. He said, *“They have only one course in English which is not taught in English even”*. If Amos was given with correct information, it would have led him to learn the Korean language before arriving to the university, which would have made his academic life much easier. When asked how he handles the class:

“So basically I'm not learning anything. I'm just...it's more like self-study...because I'm not learning anything...I'm just reading book” (Amos).

Since Seoul National University is the top University in South Korea, in general, most of the Koreans believe that all the students

enrolled at Seoul National University are really smart and capable of doing anything. In one of the pilot interviews, the participant mentioned about such ‘social perception’ and ‘high expectation’ towards students who study at Seoul National University. In her interview, the participant mentioned that while learning guitar as her hobby, whenever she encountered difficulty her teacher would question her asking ‘aren’t you a student at SNU?’, which implies that she is expected to do everything well.

Amos, reflected his university experience back in Malaysia where he would assume Seoul National University would be much better than Malaysian university because Korea is more developed country.

“They told me yeah Seoul University is a great university bla bla bla...they are like awesome...like super intelligent people there...Yeah...I was like... how can I communicate? Come on it is Seoul National University. Everyone speaks English no one can’t speak Korean. Really, they were like this...I didn’t know I was I never been in Korea before...”

(Amos).

On the other hand, some students faced misinformation directly from the professors. Two of the Ph.D. students who are really interested in research and wanted to learn more how to conduct research in a more advanced way joined the program hoping and expecting that they will get a chance to work on various research projects. When Yoona was

asked what she thinks of graduate school her response implied as if she will be doing research projects with her professors and in collaboration with other professors. Before starting her program in College of Education she asked one of the professors who was her potential advisor at that time she stated:

“You know at first, the first meeting, I asked him what project is he doing now? He refused to answer. He just said you will know later...I’ve been here nearly one year and none...So that’s pressure... So far it’s been one year nearly...But I still didn’t learn anything that I really want”
(Yoona).

Lack of collaboration and interaction with her supervisor was the major factor of poor academic adjustment. The fact she is excluded from research project participation. In many instances during the interview, the participant mentioned her desire to drop out of the program. The worst part is that she knows that professor is working on projects with other Korean students who came with her and that she gets the feeling of elimination and not part of the team.

The website of the university and department is one of the major source where students get information from. However, all the students mentioned that Korean website is different from English website and contains much more information. In fact in the case of Messi when she

was told that she needs to complete 66 credits to complete her Ph.D. she was surprised. Originally, Messi used to think that she only needs 24 credit because of inefficient information that was provided on website. This led to frustration and in every interview she mentioned that she is deciding to leave and go back.

“Because originally I thought I need 24 credits. But that’s for masters not for PhD. So after I was admitted....accepted they emailed me and I was like seriously (laugh) 66. It’s different and the requirements are so specific like you need methodologies...like this they need to mention that on the website. So I was a little surprise. So when I calculate this, how many credits and how many classes all these calculations you already feel frustrated”
(Messi).

4.1.1 Top University Dilemma

Since the ranking of Universities is becoming a very important factor in choosing what university to study at ("Business Insider," 2015). Even there are article and books on discouraging not to attend a graduate school still many students are interested in completing graduate school ("Business Insider," 2015; Cassuto, 2015). All participant chose Seoul National University mainly because of its high reputation on university ranking. For example, Yoona mentioned who herself graduated from a top university in China mentioned that in

China people do not know about universities in South Korea except for Seoul National University. When asked why she chose Seoul National University she said *“prestige and ranking”*. In a question on how the participant found information on the institution, her response was *“I checked the global ranking...most Chinese people they don’t know much about Korean Universities but Seoul National University is the only one they know.”* Dia said, *“The main reason and of course because it’s the top university. I also ask a few Korean friends”*. In case of Amos when he was studying in Malaysia he consulted with his Korean friends who were also studying with him in Malaysia, what university should he choose if he decide to go to Korea, they said, *“It is our best university”* In the pilot interview the students also mentioned the reason for them to join Seoul National University was because they have this idea of top is better regardless of if they will receive what they are really seeking for.

Participants with, in mind, expected more from Seoul National University, since it was top and they assumed that it will be better as compared to, other small universities in South Korea. When I asked what your expectation was, or how you perceive a Top University, following were the responses. In the case of Messi, her expectation toward ‘top’ university was an organized system. In her response, she compared her undergraduate university in Canada with Seoul National

University. For it was more structured and student knew the guidelines in order to graduate. Messi stated:

“It’s just the advisors like...When I was in Canada...that because it’s a national university so I assumed that they have a lot of resources. Like so...when I was in undergraduate it was also a national university I was expecting this same level of resources...The way how they do it. So every time I get a problem or issue I go to the advisors and they would be really helpful. When it’s here I was really confusing. Like they really don’t have that kind of...system for international system” (Messi).

Messi who completed her master’s degree from Japan also mentioned since I knew the Asian University system I had very low expectation even it was the top University in Korea. But she was still feeling disappointed in the university regardless her low expectation. For example, in Japan, she mentioned they offer a tutor who actually helps you to understand the procedure of graduate school or a guide who tells you how to graduate. But such support was missing in the case of Seoul National University.

Yoona also chose Seoul National University because of global ranking and prestige. When she was inquired of the imagination of top university her expectation was the ‘openness’ of the institution toward multicultural climate and not just focused on Korean students. Yoona

felt disappointed because in her department there are very few international students. She also stated, *“And the most weird thing is that our text books are all American ones or western ones but the class is totally in Korean”* (Yoon).

Amos has his own assumptions, expectations, and views regarding an international university. In his understanding an international university uses an international language. As Sharifian(2009) states in his book, “For better or worse, by choice or force, English has traveled to many parts of the world and has been used to serve various purposes” (Sharifian, 2009). Moreover his Korean friends, whom he met in Malaysia, informed him Seoul National University is one of the top universities in South Korea and highly internationalized. In addition to that his Korean friends in Malaysia told him that Korean students enrolled at Seoul National University mostly use English language as a medium of communication. In this context, it is clear that the norm on how the participant defines ‘international university’ is largely based on using ‘English language’.

4.1.2. Less or No Involvement

Most of the participants who decided to complete their higher education at Seoul National University, were interested in doing research. Yoon mentioned the reason for her to come to Seoul National

University was to do research. However, when asked if she is involved in certain research projects the answer was no. She mentioned that in her first meeting she asked the professor if he was working on a project. According to her, the answer was not clear. Plus the professor said that she will get to know about research projects later. However, it has been already a year and she is still not involved. She felt disappointed because other students who came with her are already working on different projects. Yoona mentioned about her expectation from graduate school:

“I came here as a doctoral student so I can do many project with professors or other colleagues but none. I’ve been here nearly one year and none. So that’s pressure... You know at first, the first meeting, I asked him what project his doing now. He refused to answer. He just said you will know later” (Yoona).

Messi feels the same of not being involved in research projects as compared to other Korean students in her department. She mentioned that she is taking one-on-one lectures with the professor in his office. Therefore she does not know much about other Korean students except one Chinese girl in her department and what kind of projects they are working on. Furthermore Professor never tells her about the research projects that he is working on with other students. However, she stated

that other students in her department are working on different projects with the professor except her. She also told me that since the professor does not encourage her to start research projects or invite her research project meetings, she has also lost motivation to initiate a research project. Moreover, her professor suggested her to go back to Canada for a year and then come back. Because of that she feels as if professor is not interested in working with her at all. To the questions regarding involvement in the research projects when asked:

Researcher: *I wonder if the professor involves you in research projects same as Korean students?*

Messi: *No!*

Researcher: *Has he ever asked you to come up with an idea to publish something?*

Messi: *No!*

Researcher: *How about you? Do you have interest in publishing?*

Messi: *I have.*

Amos' situation is different as compared with other participants. He came to Seoul National University with a project and wanted to work on it. However, he mentioned that when he asked the professor for a help the professor responded that you have to do everything on your own. Amos, a PhD student studying Physical education was looking for an engineer from the engineering department for his

research. He requested professor if he could get him connected to somebody he knows but the professor refused to give help but instead asked him to work independently which shows a lack of professor's interest.

“(I was expecting him to) mentor me and then talk to me and then like...like fund make a connection, because I was new here and he is here more than 30 years here and he could introduce me to people and place or like yeah go meet that professor. I was just reading all the professor engineering. What topic they teach, what subject, what their research is or is it related or ask that guy this guy what is he doing, what that professor doing in engineering. I emailed many professors and ran after. Only one of them replied” (Amos).

Diwan also had immense interest in research, however, he mentioned that he is not working with other team projects, in fact, he is told to work alone with the professor. But there is nothing about publication. He believes that he is a special student and may be other students cannot understand him better that is why he has to work all by himself. However, it does not work that way. Professors usually make sure that students work in teams if they want to. Again it shows that international students are not involved or less involved in academic community at graduate school.

Dia had the similar concern because she mentioned that she is not

working with the professor on any projects like the other Korean students do. She blamed herself for not having enough Korean skills and she was told by her lab mates that she needs to improve her Korean if she wants to be involved. In her third interview, she told me that she is not studying as a full-time student but only a part timer through making an agreement with her supervisor. Officially she is supposed to be in her lab from 9:00pm to 6:00pm but the professor has allowed her to study on her own in the library or anywhere, where she feels comfortable. The reason for that Dia told me was:

“I spend the whole semester in the lab doing nothing. Just studying by myself.. I cannot do anything in the lab, the atmosphere, my Korean level is not good enough for projects so why they want me there. So what’s the point...I’m not involved in any project or anything” (Dia).

4.1.3. Language Barrier

Language has always been an issue for international students especially in English speaking countries where most of the international students prefer to study. Students feel lonely and even excluded (David, 2013) because of lack of interaction due to poor language proficiency. The same issue of language was faced by the international students studying at Seoul National University. Amos who was told before coming to Seoul National University that the entire program is in English and he doesn’t need to worry about the language. However, in

reality, Amos had to attend classes that were taught in Korean that he could not understand. . When asked how he handled the class, he responded,

“Basically I’m learning nothing. I’m just...it’s more like self-study...because I’m not learning anything...I’m just reading book...I thought I can handle it, but as time passed I found it’s not possible for me to doing my masters, because I don’t have background in Korean Language. It is impossible” (Amos).

In conversation with Amos, it was discovered that he was in favor of learning the Korean language. Although he was interested in learning the language, the reason for him not studying Korean was because he was told he doesn’t need to learn Korean. He kept questioning while we talked:

“I wonder why the administration doesn’t require me to have the Korean proficiency and has required me to have English proficiency instead...Why you don’t require students Korean proficiency test if conducting the classes in Korean” (Amos).

Again it’s a matter of wrong expectation given to Amos before coming to Seoul National University. It was observed that Amos who is completely lost and discouraged and feels like if he can never adjust academically because of all the wrong expectations he had when

starting graduate school here at Seoul National University. Through his conversation, it seems if he was asked to learn Korean language before starting graduate program he would have done it. But because he was given the expectation and hope that everything is in English he just needs to prove his English skills that is where he was misled. Now for him, language has become a big barrier between his relationship with professor and students, plus he mentioned above that he learns nothing in the class, except sitting and watching the professor and other students.

***Researcher:** So you think language is really keeping you from learning?*

***Amos:** of course! Definitely! So basically I'm not learning anything. I'm just...it's more like self-study...because I'm not learning anything...I'm just reading book...*

Dia, on the other hand, learned Korean for one year and then came to Seoul National University, even she was told that the classes are in English. She mentioned that Korean course that she took for one year taught her the basic Korean skills which wasn't sufficient enough for academic understanding. Dia said, "If I have time which I don't have enough, I try to review my Korean books and grammar". She mentioned that sometimes she did understand some parts of the lectures but if she had a question, she kept it to herself so that she could ask at

the end of the class. But the problem she stated was:

“So at the end of classes if I have a question, I’m trying to ask him, let say oh I understand this with little bit of Korean, but can you explain again. But he is like superfast. But completely no. that’s the truth” (Dia).

For Dia, the most frustrating part is when she tries to visit her professor for a help. When she has a problem she wants to share the difficulty clearly and freely so that professor could give offer effective help. However, when she is forced to speak in Korean she is not able to express what she really feels. On top of that, she is told that this is Korea and she needs to do what Koreans do.

Dia also mentioned since she is the student from Korean Government Scholarship Program, therefore, she was given the opportunity to learn Korean for one year. Also before coming to Seoul National University she visited South Korea for traveling and got interested in Asian languages. She mentioned:

“Korean Government Scholarship Program provide us with one year of Korean Language also, but it’s not enough. Especially the vocabulary that they teach and the speed (talking about the class lecture), you know during Korean language class they teach you future, present, past. How to survive outside and it’s not actually...not easy...I cannot understand, especially with something related with

medicine” (Dia).

Researcher: *So do you think language is really keeping you from learning what you really wanted to learn and grow? Is language a big issue?*

Dia: *Yes. Totally. I’m sure.*

Researcher: *How do you manage, since you are not understanding anything? Do you study on your own or do you have your own international group where you guys you meet together? How do you manage?*

Dia: *No, I study alone, actually just reading the books. And sometimes with one friend. We try to help each other, if we don’t understand something but nothing else.*

In Diwan’s case, he does not really need to learn the Korean language since his program is totally in English. However, he realized that in order to be efficient he must learn the Korean language because most of the University- related programs or events are informed through emails that are in the Korean Language. However, he got discouraged from learning the language because he realized even he knows the language he is still and always considered as a foreigner and language doesn’t really matter.

Another theme that emerged was that international students had no or few options. They mentioned we are required to take many classes such as methodology classes however not many methodology classes are offered in English. In the case of Messi she wasn’t sure about the

credits for her PhD course since the website is not updated. She thought she need around 30 credits in order to complete her PhD however it was totally different from what she expected. Later she was informed that she needs to complete at least 66 credits in order to graduate. For her, the biggest issue was that she was required to complete certain courses in order to graduate, however, those courses were only offered in the Korean language.

“Because originally I thought I need 24 credits. But that’s for masters not for PhD. So after I was admitted....accepted they emailed me and I was like seriously 66. It’s different and the requirements are so specific like you need methodologies...like this they need to mention that on the website. So I was a little surprise. So when I calculate this, how many credits and how many classes all these calculations you already feel frustrated”
(Messi).

Yoona’s case was similar but also different. Sometimes because a lack of guidance students doesn’t know that they could take courses from different majors as well, which could be credited to them. While talking to Yoona she mentioned that she is interested in taking courses from different major but options are so limited. Her issue was that because all students always take classes from their own major so she also has to follow what

everyone is doing in the fear of being left out.

Researcher: *So far are you satisfied with the educational system here?*

Yoona: *So far...Not really...*

Researcher: *Why do you think you are not satisfied? Why do you think you are not getting what you wanted?*

Yoona: *The courses...what I really want to learn. So far it's been one year nearly...But I still didn't learn anything that I really want.*

Researcher: *Do you know we can take 50% from other majors.*

Yoona: *Oh really? I didn't know that.*

Amos had the similar experience of course options. He mentioned the similar thing that during the semester he is offered only one class in English. Whereas when he called the administration officials regarding the classes he was informed that he doesn't need to learn Korean because the program is conducted in English. Amos said:

"Everything is in Korean...Everything! They only have one course per semester in English, which is not fully taught in English even...They (department) can't do anything...I was wondering how come the administration doesn't require me to have the Korean Proficiency and has required me to have English proficiency, and then I come here the exam is in

Korean Language...why you don't require students Korean proficiency test if conducting classes in Korean” (Amos).

4.1.4. Lack of Socialization

Socialization was another issue that was faced by the international students. “Socialization is known to be a process through which an individual forms a relationship with other individuals” (E. L. Anderson, 2012). International students had a hard time to make a relationship with other local students even they had Korean speaking skills or not. According to the participants, they said that Korean always like to stay together and it's very hard to be part of them. All of the participants mentioned that they don't have any friends except the few international students. However, Messi who is a Taiwanese-Canadian and has studied in Japan believes that she is not here at graduate school to develop a friendship but study and that is what she expected from the Korean students.

For Diwan the biggest issue was loneliness. According to him real learning takes place when you sit together and talk about different studies and ideas. He argued that here in Korea he does socialize with the local students, but most of that socialization takes place while drinking. To him while drinking it's hard to discuss the academic issues.

“Somehow after coming here socialization didn’t happen as I expected. I really felt segregated as I’m really different and I’m a foreigner here. That really blocked my interest to learn Korean...I became very conscious...you really can’t open...maybe the culture difference” (Diwan).

In Diwan’s conversation it was found the only people that he hangs out is the Bangladeshi friends that he has in Korea. He mentioned about some other international students but they were also not Korean. It’s already been a year and he hasn’t been able to make a Korean friend. During conversation when asked whether the participant has any Korean friends that could rely on, someone to call at night if there’s an emergency the answer was no. He mentioned here it’s always I have to be formal and there is no comfort zone. Even for meeting a friend you need to arrange a time and it’s more like a formal meeting than casually meeting a friend. So there is no friendship element.

“There is no opportunity to talk to friends (Korean classmates) about that academic discussion (informal setting)... there is little opportunity which are like you have to take appointment save a seat Diwan, sit very formally well. I don’t do things like that way. This is not my style... what I used to do in my in my country. During my previous school we have a like you know like café and I’m telling you there so many brilliant things happened from that café. From that group we started volunteering” (Diwan).

Dia had similar issues when making a relationship with Korean students at school. Most of the people that she knew were from outside or other international students studying at Seoul National University. In the beginning, she mentioned that she tried to go out with her lab mates and tried her best to socialize in order to blend in the system and get to know people more. However, she couldn't find that friendship element.

“Anyways it’s awkward to talk to them actually no, now a days I really don’t talk to them at all not even hi. Something like that so it’s super awkward to go and eat” (Dia).

She mentioned that when she doesn't understand something in the class she usually depend on her friend who is also a foreigner but in the same physical education department. She mentioned that she could talk to Amir comfortably as compared to other Korean lab mates. In her final interview, I asked her if she made any new friends to which she replied, *“I also made new friends. Do you know there is a Latin American round table? So I made some friends there. It was actually cultural activity. There is a girl from Peru. She invited me to that.”* She mentioned that she got a Korean friend as well but she is her private tutor and she is very kind to her. Dia mentioned that she pay the tuition fee to get lessons from her. Will that be considered friendship is another

debate?

Yoona feels also segregated and to her, the only friend that she could rely on is another Chinese girl. Yoona has been in Korea for almost a year and still, she couldn't make a sound and a close relationship with other Korean students in her class. To her experience, the classmates that she has in her major, are very friendly in the class but after the class, there is no conversation at all. Even her lab mates she mentioned that she tried to become friendlier with them but no in vain. She mentioned that once she entered the lab there is quietness as if they are scared to talk in front of her.

Researcher: *Do they (classmates) take initiative to become friends with you because you an international students and you are foreigner right? So for you it's sometime you expect the host country to take the first step.*

Yoona: *Right right right*

Researcher: *So do they make any effort to socialize with you or...?*

Yoona: *No! Most of the time I'm the one to say hey, did you have a good time? Or...?*

Sharoon: *Do they continue from there asking you more questions?*

Yoona: *No!*

Yoona also mentioned that she has a new friend from China. Since she is new she is trying her best to make friends and socialize as much

as possible. She is also very young and full of energy. Yoona mentioned at how surprised she was when seeing the new international students trying to build relationship in the program. Yoona felt that she already made so many Korean friends and wanted to learn from her. With her secret to making Korean friends, she told Yoona that she's also very stressed because she feels that she's the one who is keen on making friend not the Korean students. Korean students don't tend to initiate the conversation unless international students approach them first.

Like other participants, Amos mentioned that his classmates are helpful whenever he needs help but that's it. There is no hanging out together like in a friendly manner. He stated, "*We don't really communicate with each other*". He mentioned in the class they always sit separate and we do not socialize. He mentioned one of the biggest issues or problem that he is facing is that his classmates want him to be exactly like them. He said in his interview, "*Korean classmates are really helpful but they want to put on you their culture. They don't understand you are from a different culture.*" He tried to compare his experience in Malaysia where social climate for accepting different cultures were more open and diverse.

4.2. Adjustment and Mastery Phase: Strategies Toward Adjustment and Their Outcomes

In the next phase of Adjustment and Mastery, participants with the passage of time made their own ways to adjust to the system. By this time they have already completed first semester and have transitioned to the adjustment phase, which finally leads to the mastering the university's norms, culture, rules and regulations etc. Few themes were identified while interviewing the participants. The themes include, socialization, learning the language and independent study..

4.2.1 Socialization

All the participants mentioned that socialization with other international students helped them to adjust to certain extent. However, it was not with the local students but the international students or students that they knew from their own country of origin. Participants informed that in the beginning they tried to make friends with the Korean students but it did not work.

One of the major barrier for international students to interact with Korean students is that they don't want to become a burden to them and cultural differences also interfering interaction. Diwan mentioned that when he needs help he ask for help from the boys and he stated "they are really helping". But he mentioned the fact "I feel bad because I

don't understand a lot of things and I bother them a lot" As far as girls are concerned he said, *"I don't know...I'm really cool...okay with female friends but here like...I don't know...things are somehow different...May be they are not comfortable with me...May be I didn't know the culture very much.* It could be inferred that Diwan is coming to the point that he believes that he does not understand the culture very much and he needs to understand their system and how things work in Korea and in particular at Seoul National University.

Dia also had similar experience of adjusting through socialization. She tried in the beginning to spend more time with her lab mates and tried to follow what they do. Through her conversation it was found that she tried to adjust and understand her Korean classmates but they were not willing to understand her culture and background. They simply told her, *"This is Korea"*. They told her regardless of where you come from since this is Korean and a Korean National University she must do everything according to their culture. However, she mentioned that now she has a friend in her lab who is always willing to help her when she needs help. She also mentioned that she tries to eat with her classmates so that she could socialize with them but it is not really working well for her. She mentioned that they want to do it almost every day and then I have to eat what they eat. So sometimes she stated that she refuse to join them which brings a gap in the relationship.

Yeah actually yes...maybe in the beginning was...difficult for me to go and eat together every day coz you have to go and eat what they eat but I have problem with the food. So it's difficult... Even if they invite you and I don't want to eat that, why should I go right? So sometimes I go and sometimes just stay...Try to force me to be like Korean told you...But I was like no, I'm not hungry I will not go...Coz it's different culture. Maybe I was rude to them...Someday it's okay but every day no. (Dia)

In Dia's case also involved cultural conflict. However, it seems that she is not willing to compromise in every situation just in order to socialize with her lab mates. In her final interview she mentioned that she made new friends but they are all Latinos. On the other hand it could be assumed that her Korean classmates are also not willing to understand her culture and her background. It could be concluded that if both parties try to understand each other there could be improved interaction. This could lead to more adjustment within lab mates, which could lead to learning and knowledge sharing and ultimately achieving more academic adjustment. Dia also mentioned that now she talks to other international students in her department, when she does not understand something important.

As far as Amos is concerned regarding socialization with his classmates, he said, *"We don't really communicate with each other but*

if I ask them something they are helpful” However he did mention when asked about the best thing about Seoul National University, he stated:

“My lab mates they are really nice people. They are really helpful they care, they care lot about me and that makes me feel good. Make me feel there are people who care about me that’s all they always encourage me. (Amos)

Most of the participants have the similar opinion about the Korean students that they are very helpful and try their best to explain in English when asked for help. These are the areas where international students are very satisfied. However, international students feel uncomfortable asking too often because they feel the friendship element is missing. Amos gave his own suggestion regarding more understanding of international students and local students so that they could have a smooth relationship.

“I would like to conduct some kind of lecture or workshop tell them, because I didn’t really feel that but I see they don’t understand that we are not from the different culture I would like to have some workshop to tell them not everyone should follow our culture, you have touh...act like international...when we have international then we have to act like that” (Amos)

In conclusion international students have made some progress in socializing with the international students. Socialization is one of the ways through which they are able to learn and gain information that they may not be able to receive from books or professors. In their labs they are able to talk to the local students for help. Also when the lab members go out for dinners they join them and try to make good relationship. However, according to our definition it is about making relationship. It could be another topic about how much that relationship should take place. Should it be formal or casual? From the discussion of participants it could be inferred, they want more than formal relationship. It could be assumed most of your participants are still in the phase of adjustment in socialization with local students and have already received mastery in making relationships with other international students or students from their own country. This has led to move out from the cultural shock phase towards adjustment in their academia.

4.2.2. Learning the Language

Another theme that emerged through interviewing the participants for the ways how international students try to adjust is to learn the Korean language. In one of the shocks that international student had was the importance of Korean language in university life. Most of the

participants expected that language will not be an issue for them since it is an international university and international language will be the main medium of communication. Moreover, they were told that they don't need to have a Korean background since English is the main medium of instructions. However, after getting registered and they started receiving emails or other information, which was in Korean, lectures that were supposed to be conducted in English were mostly in Korean. The professor and the students encouraged them to speak Korean. This situation led to stress and disappointment. On asking how they cope with this situation, participants mentioned that they have started learning the language.

Dia already learned Korean Language before starting her graduate school here at Seoul National University. But after coming to the school she realized that she needs to improve her Korean language skills because the Korean that professors speak is very academic and she needs to learn more of an academic Korean language. She mentioned that she has hired a private tutor with whom she tries to learn the language. However, she mentioned she is still shy to speak Korean language. Jessi as well before coming to South Korea learned the language. She already had the experience of studying in Japan and thought she might face the same language issue.

Amos doesn't seem so much interested in learning the language

because in one of his interviews he mentioned, *“I’m not here to learn language, I’m here to do my research and focus on it not the language because if I wanted to learn language I stay at my home and go to some Korean institute.”* His suggestion was that school should test our proficiency of the Korean language before admitting students to the school. From his conversation it was found that he was not against learning the language but wanted to suggest that school should clearly inform the students that they should learn the Korean language before starting their school.

Yoonaj majored in Korean language so she didn’t have much problem with the language as compared to the other students. However, stated that still there are many words or sentences she does not understand in the class and need to improve her Korean language even more. She mentioned that she is making effort to write her papers in the Korean language. Moreover, all her presentation she present in the Korean language and even the class discussion, she always uses the Korean language, and even she could use English language. Her boyfriend is Korean and she mentioned that she always uses Korean language while talking to him. From the conversation with Yoon it could be inferred how she realized the importance of learning the local language and it has helped her to adjust academically.

Diwan also started learning the Korean language but lost his

interest. However, even his major is entirely in English but he realized that learning the language is of immense importance. The reason for losing his interest in Korean language was:

“I had the interest. I know that if I want to learn in Korea there is no way of escaping Korean Language because that is the first thing. But the thing is like the way I was different like seen different entity I just lost my interest. I just lost the whole damn interest because it doesn't matter where I go...It doesn't matter what is my complexion I'm just a foreigner here. And being an Asian foreigner is the worst thing...I think guess it.”(Diwan)

To summarize, the international students have to come to realization that learning the Korean language is of immensely important. As Diwan mentioned, *“there is no escape”* International students know that they are and they will miss much if they do not learn the local language. Some of the participants are confused whether to focus on the language or on their research. However, to adjust and understanding the academic culture and rules the students understand that it is important to learn the Korean language. Participants who made effort to learn the language were able to adjust much more as compared to the other students who are not trying to learn the Korean language.

4.2.3. Independent Study

Another strategy that the international students used to adjust academically was to study on their own. When the researcher asked the participants, how do you work on things that you do not understand in the class? Most of them replied by stating that they study on their own. Sometimes they directly email professor on personal level, or ask other international students and the local students. In case of Diwan while interviewing him he showed me many books that he is reading on his own. He stated:

“I actually gave up...I actually gave up, because...what I like what I...in my understanding I’m not getting what I’m seeking for. Like the discussion that I told you about are very much book oriented. But what’s written in the book and what have you seen....and connecting those two things to understanding maybe maybe it’s may be my lack of depth of knowledge or whatever. But I personally don’t agree with that because I read a lot...I talk with a lot of practitioner...like outside of the school.... so I’m doing these things in my way. But...uh...I.....how to say.....somehow somehow...I just gave up like well...I’m not getting what I’m seeking for” (Diwan)

Dia also used the similar strategy the one Diwan uses reading books. On asking how you manage to understand the content taught in the class since it is in the Korean language and you do not completely

understand it, Dia replied,

“I study alone, actually just reading the books and sometime with one friend. We try to help each other, if we don’t understand something but nothing else....Usually alone actually” (Dia)

Jessi had a different experience because she is already studying on her own. She mentioned once a week she meet professor and the professor ask her to read certain books and then they discuss together. She mentioned that once professor tried to conduct a class in English with other Korean students but it did not go well so she had to drop that class. She mentioned sometimes she feels pressured meeting the professor alone because she needs to prepare everything because there are no other participants except professor and her in the discussion.

Amos who has no background of the Korean language had hard time understanding the content of the lecture. Upon asking how do you understand the lecture, he replied, *“It’s more like self-study...I’m just reading books”*

Through the responses of the participants it could be inferred, that international students try to study on their own as much as possible in order to “fit” and get through the classes. Since the professors allowed them to make presentations in English and they have the permission to write their term papers in English self-study helped them to adjust

academically in the school system and Seoul National University.

Chapter 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The influx of International students in South Korea is rising drastically. However, according to the Seoul National University statistic, the number has dropped. It is important to understand these international students and their adjustment issues at Seoul National University if the policy makers desire to have more international students and have more diversity. In the present study, five participants from the college of education were invited to take part through in-depth interviews where each interviewee were interviewed three times. They were asked what their expectations were and did those expectations affect their adjustment process while studying at Seoul National University. Moreover, the study explored the strategies students use to adjust toward their difficulty. Different themes emerged such as that led to wrong expectation, such as misinformation, less involvement, lack of socialization etc. In regard to students' adjustment strategy, themes such as socialization, learning the language and self-study were emerged.

5.1. Implications

Present study helps to understand a few of the many issues and challenges international students face while adjusting to the academic setting at Seoul National University. Having or wrong expectation or giving the students expectations that cannot be fulfilled could lead to

disappointment or in this case dropping out of the school. There are certain steps that could be taken in order to help these international students adjust well.

First, the English website of Seoul National University should be as updated as the Korean website. Also what kind of browser works in Korea for official websites, since many students spend hours sorting out why they are not able to upload their application since they were using google chrome or some other internet browsers. If the website is updated the students could get proper information and what steps to take and most importantly what to expect at a graduate school here at Seoul National University.

Second, students should be informed clearly and should be given right information about the department exactly the way the department works. If there are no English classes offered or the professor teaches in Korean students should be informed that they need to learn Korean before starting graduate school. Korean proficiency should be required if the classes are offered in Korean at a certain department. At the same time if the class is in English and there is only one international student in the class who doesn't know Korean at all professor should not switch to Korean because that gives unfair treatment to the one international student. It should be known that Korean students who signed up for that class know in advance that the particular course will be taught in

English and since they are good at English that is the reason they signed up for the class otherwise they would take some other Korean lecture.

Third, through this study, it was found that international students feel that they are not involved in research and projects the same way as other Korean students are. Most of the participants chose Seoul National University because it's the top research intensive university. The main reason for them to come to Seoul National University was to get involved in research and to acquire skills to become an independent researcher. If local students feel uncomfortable working with the international because of the language, professor could make a separate group for the international student so that they could feel that they are also the part of the department.

According to the official website of Seoul National University, they are striving to have more diversity on campus. The number of exchange students has decreased in the last few years. One of the main reasons is that there are few courses offered in English. Language is a hurdle for the international students to consider Seoul National University as a graduate school. Not all but at least on course per semester in English could encourage the international students around the world to choose the institution for their study destination. Moreover, faculty on campus should consider that students

who enrolled to the institution had motivation for research therefore appropriate training and supervision needs to be offered.

The leadership of professor could play a great role in making international students and local students work together by making sure that the international students work together with the local students on different projects and research ideas. Professors should come up with ideas about help not only the international students but also the Korean students to understand the importance of working with different cultures and nationalities. Living in a global world a diverse student group could help the local and the international students to improve their global competence.

5.2. Limitation and Future Research

This is a case study of Seoul National University and focuses only on the College of Education with small range of participants. Future research needs to explore international students' adjustment process in terms of disciplinary in order to understand the expectation of international students and their actual experiences.. Seoul National University is leading its way to the top in the global ranking as well, further research and understanding these international could help the school and the students at the same time.

Some of the international students have good skills of Korean

language others are good at only English, and some of the students lack in proficiency at both English and Korean. International students' difficulty is not only limited to language issue but extends to issue of loneliness, cultural difference. Comparative studies could be conducted to explore difference in students' adjustment based on their language proficiency- for example student with high proficiency in both Korean and English could have more smooth experience compared to those who lack proficiency in both language.

5.3. Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to understand the academic adjustment issues and challenges international student's face at Seoul National University, focusing on the expectations of international students before arriving to the university and whether those expectations affect their adjustment. Findings of the present study show that the international students at Seoul National students are not able to adjust well in the academic setting due to the wrong expectations they had and that they were given. Findings indicate that misinformation led students to wrong expectation. It was also found that international students who came to Seoul National University for the purpose of research, got disappointed because of no involvement in research projects from the professor which led to maladjustment. Lack of

socialization with the local students was another factor that led to little or no adjustment at all. Lysgaard's U-Curve theory of adjustment was used as a theoretical framework. However, it was found that not all the students have honeymoon period in the first week. Some students went through great stress even from the first day at school. As Seoul National University seeks diversity and more international students they need to take full responsibility of the students enrolled already on campus. Policy makers at Seoul National University need to make structured programs for the international students blending with the local student if they wish to attract more international students from all over the world.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. Why did you decide to study at a graduate school?
2. After completing undergraduate degree what was your expectation in general regarding graduate school?
3. How is your graduate life different from undergraduate life in general? Is it the way you expected it to be or totally different? How?
4. Tell me about your previous undergraduate or graduate school? For example what was your major? Why did you choose that major?
5. What was the campus life of your previous University? Stressful, relaxed etc.?
6. What were the students like in the classes that you took? Friendly, competitive etc.?
7. What were the professors like in general? Strict, easy going etc.?
8. How do you think Seoul National University is different from your previous schooling experience?
9. Why did you choose Seoul National University?
10. How did you know about Seoul National University?
11. Did you try to go through the Website of Seoul National University? Was it helpful?
12. Were you able to find Professors and their information on the website?
13. What's is major and why did you choose this major?
14. What is the medium of language used in your program?
15. Did you learn Korean language before or after coming to Korea?
16. Do you think Language is keeping you from learning or getting most out of the learning process at Seoul National University?
17. What was your perception and expectations before coming to Seoul National University?
18. Was it different from what you thought? If yes, how?
19. Are you satisfied with the education system? If yes, how, if no why?
20. What do you think about the Professors at Seoul National University?
21. What were you expectations from the Professors at Seoul National University?
22. Do the professors like it when you ask for help?
23. Do the professors encourage you when you are less successful?
24. Are your professor's approachable whenever you need their help?
25. How do you define your relationship with your professors?

26. What is the interest of research area? What would you like to write your thesis on?
27. In case if you have already decided about your thesis, what is the title?
28. Why and how did you choose that? Did professor help you while choosing in the process of choosing your research interest?
29. How would you define yourself? Do you think you like to work on your own or you prefer being guided and given instructions by at every step in writing your thesis process?
30. So far do you think that professor is interested in what you doing or what you want to do in the future in your research interest area?
31. What do you think about the Korean students at Seoul National University?
32. What were your expectations from the domestic students at Seoul National University?
33. Will your classmates encourage you when you are less successful?
34. Are your classmates willing to explain things you do not understand?
35. Are your classmates happy when you are successful?
36. Do your classmates give you the feeling that you are a member of the "in" crowd?
37. Do your classmates share experiences/empathy?
38. Do they like to invite you for group studies and discussion?
39. Do they feel happy if you land in their group projects?
40. How are you adjusting to the academic life at SNU? What changes have you made in yourself to get well along?
41. What difficulties are you facing in the classroom (during lecture, class discussion)?
42. Do you feel any discrimination or racism in the school setup?
43. Do you ever think of dropping out? If yes, why?
44. What makes you not dropout?
45. Do you share your feelings with your professors and students regarding those feelings? How do they react and respond? Do they encourage you not to dropout or you feel they don't really care?
46. When do you get the most frustrated while studying at Seoul National University?
47. How do you manage to pay tuition fee?
48. What is the best and worst thing about studying at Seoul National University?
49. What would you like to add or remove if you are in some authority to help the international students academically adjust well?
50. Do you think the teacher has your best interest at heart?

**RESEARCH EXPLANATION AND CONSENT FORM
FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

Study Title: Academic Adjustment of International Students at Seoul National University

Principal Investigator: Sharoon

I am a student at Seoul National University, in the department of Education. I am planning to conduct a research study, to which I invite you to take part in. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, plus what will be inquired of you, and the way we would like to use your information if you decide to take participate in this study.

1. Why are you doing this study?

The purpose of the study is to understand the key issues and challenges that international students face in adjusting to academic life at Seoul National University South Korea.

2. How many people will participate in this study?

About 5 students will participate in this study.

3. What will I do if I choose to be in this study?

Semi-structured Interview will be conducted. You will be asked around 20 questions regarding your academic adjustment at Seoul National University, in three different interviews. For example question regarding different experiences that you had while adjusting to the academic life at Seoul National University. Your interview will be audio-recorded in this interview to make sure that your information is well noted and remembered. These audio files will be saved on my personal computer. If you prefer not to be audio-recorded, I will take notes instead.

Interview length:

There will be three interviews of about 30 minutes each. However you might

be contacted in case of some other clarifications or other details on the phone.

Interview location:

Location will be chosen according to your convenience. If you feel comfortable meeting at a café on campus or your department office it will be accommodated.

4. Can I stop participating during research?

If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to participate in this study, please feel free not to. If at any time you would like to stop participating, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You may withdraw from this study at any time, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation.

5. What are the possible risks or discomforts?

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life.

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality of the information we collect from you could be breached – we will take steps to minimize this risk, as discussed in more detail below in this form.

6. What are the possible benefits for me or others?

You are not likely to have any direct benefit from being in this research study. This study is designed to learn more about the academic adjustment process of international students at Seoul National University. The study results may be used to help other international students in the future.

7. What are the possible risks or discomforts if I do not take part in this research?

You may not participate in this study, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding not to participate.

8. How will you protect the information you collect about me, and how will that information be shared?

Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used, unless you give us the permission to do so.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, I will use pseudonym instead of your real name. The audio recorded files will also have additional security codes so no other could access them.

I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers – if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you before I share it

If I think that you intend to harm yourself or others, I will notify the appropriate people with this information.

9. Financial information

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

10. Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns about this research study?

If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher below.

Contact Person: Sharoon
010-5730-2751
sharoonmaroon@snu.ac.kr

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the following office at Seoul National University:

Institutional Review Board
Seoul National University (SNUIRB) Phone: (02) 880-5153

CONSENT FORM

1. I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me.
2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact.
3. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research.
4. I agree that researcher collect and analyze my information to the extent the current law and IRB standards approve.
5. I know I may withdraw from this study at any time, and will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation.
6. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form.
7. I agree to audio-recording in this interview.

Participant's Name (printed)

Participant's Signature Date

Notification on results

Reception

Principle Investigator	Name: Sharoon	Affiliation: 서울대학교 교육학과	Position: 석사과정
Funding Organization	N/A		

Information on Research Project

Approval number	IRB No. 1704/003-016		
Title of Research Project (Korean)	남한 국제학생들의 학문적 적응 : 서울대 사례연구		
Type of Research	Dissertation Research, Interviews (Including FGIs)		
Types of deliberation	Prompt deliberation		
Date of deliberation	2017-04-24		
Subject of deliberation	Research plan(Reconsideration), Consent forms or statement of reasons on consent exemption for research participants, Research participant recruiting advertisement		
Deliberation result	승인		
Date of approval	2017-04-24	Approval validity period	2018-04-23
Regular reporting cycle	6Month		
Review opinion	1. Submitted research plan has been approved as a result of deliberation. 2. The researcher is expected to conduct one's research		

using approved documents, and if adjustments need to be made in terms of the plan (change of researcher, change in research contents etc.), please proceed the research after applying for modification to the Committee and gaining its approval

3. **Termination report must be submitted** when research is completed within the valid period, and if research needs to be continued beyond the approved period of validity , please proceed with **deliberation on continuation by 24 March, 2018.**

2017.04.24

Chairperson of the Seoul National University Bioethics Committee

Researchers conducting research that has been approved by the Committee must comply with the following requirements.

1. Research must be conducted based on the research plan.
2. Consent forms for research participants must be used only after being approved by the Committee.
3. Consent forms for research participants whose mother language is not Korean must be used only after translating into the participants' mother language, and translations ought to be confirmed and approved by the Committee.
4. For protection of research participants, modifications during research conduct must obtain prior approval from the Committee except for inevitable situations. Immediate report to the Committee is required in terms of modifications made under emergent conditions, for protection of research participants.
5. Written report is required for the death, hospitalization, fatal disease of registered research participants based on the research plan approved by the Committee.
6. Immediate report to the Committee is required in terms of new information that can bring damaging effect to the safety of the clinical testing or research participant.

7. Items related to research process should be reported to the Committee upon request.
8. Research participant recruiting advertisement must obtain approval from the Committee before use.
9. Consent from the research participant must be gained based on ample explanation and without forced or undue influence. Also, sufficient opportunities must be provided to the potential research participants in contemplation of participation.

Abstract

요약(국문초록)

본 연구는 서울대학교 대학원에 재학하고 있는 외국인 유학생들의 학업 적응 양상을 알아보고자 하였다. 한국의 대학에 다니는 외국인 유학생에 관한 기존 연구들은 주로 대학 입학 이후에 그들이 직면하는 상황과 문제에 한정되는 한계를 가진다. 본 연구에서는 외국인 유학생들이 서울대학교에 입학하기 이전의 학업 기대를 기준으로, 서울대학교의 학습환경에서 초기의 학습기대가 학교 적응에 어떠한 영향을 미치는 지에 대해 조사하였다. 문화적응과정에 대한 리스가드의 U-곡선 이론을 분석틀로 하여, 외국인 유학생들이 학업여행을 시작하는 단계에서는 문화충격과 함께 새로운 문화에 적응해 나가며 밀월단계에 머물고 있을 것이라 기대하였다. 본 연구는 눈덩이 표집방법을 통해 사범대학에 다니고 있는 다섯 명의 외국인 유학생을 대상으로 질적연구방법을 사용하여 조사되었다. 각각의 학생들에 대해 40분에서 60분 정도 반구조화 심층 면담을 세 차례씩 실시하였다. 분석 결과, 외국인 유학생들의 학업 적응과정은 기존의 리스가드의 이론과 일치하지 않음이 드러났다. 학문에 대한 큰 뜻을 품고 유학 생활을 시작하여 서울대학교에서 수학한 지 일년 정도가 지난 학생들조차도 여전히 적응하지 못해 어려움을 겪고 있었다. 유학 이전에 학업에 대한 높은 기대수준을 갖고 있던 학생일수록 끝내 적응하지 못할 것이라는 두려움을 드러내며 중도 탈락까지 생각할 정도로 실망의 정도가 더 큰 것으로 나타났다. 반면, 낮은 기대 수준을 갖고 있던 학생들의 경우는 오히려 서울대학교의 학문적 환경에 더욱 잘 적응하는 것으로 분석되었다.

주요어: 외국인 유학생, 학업 적응, 학업 기대, 사회화, 최상위권 대
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학번: 2015-22348